



[Incumbent Democrat Raphael Warnock Defeats Republican Challenger Herschel Walker in Georgia's U.S. Senate Runoff Election](#)

This week, the midterm election season in the United States officially came to a close, with the final race for a U.S. Senate seat being decided. Incumbent Democratic Senator Raphael Warnock won re-election in a runoff against Republican candidate Herschel Walker. With 99% reporting, Warnock won with 51.4% of the vote, while Walker had 48.6%. Warnock's victory now means that Democrats will enjoy an outright 51-49 majority in the Senate, no longer being reliant on U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris' tiebreaking vote as was the case previously when the upper chamber of Congress was evenly split at 50-50. In Georgia elections, a runoff between the two leading candidates is initiated if no candidate wins 50% or more of the vote – which is what transpired back in early November to trigger the runoff election. Raphael Warnock also had a higher percentage of votes than as well. The Senate majority will give Democrats more bargaining power and provide them with the opportunity to block certain legislation that Republicans in the House attempt to push through.

Many political analysts and prognosticators had predicted that Republicans would do very well in the 2022 U.S. midterm elections. This was based on polling and the historical precedent that the party the incumbent president belongs to usually loses a significant number of seats in both chambers of U.S. Congress. This historical trend, along with high inflation and economic underperformance led many to believe that Democrats were going to lose badly. Most Republicans were expecting to win the House by a large margin and pick up the Senate as well in what they were calling an anticipated "red wave." However, surprisingly, Republicans only gained a razor-thin margin in the House and actually lost a net seat in the Senate. This has caused a lot of finger-pointing in the Republican Party as they scramble to find out why they underperformed so badly. While Republicans are still searching for answers, one thing they have already begun to blame is poor candidate choices. Many of the candidates that underperformed were Trump-aligned extreme conservatives. The number of extreme Republican candidates could be at least partially attributed to Democrats' risky strategy of funding extreme Republican candidates during primaries in order to have a better chance of winning the general election. This strategy could have backfired, but seemed to have paid off. Another contributing factor to the Republicans' underperformance was the high turnout of young voters, many of whom seemed to be motivated by the recent removal of federal protection of abortion rights with the overturning of *Roe v. Wade*. Lastly, and maybe most significantly, the negative Trump effect appears to have played a notable role as well, with many of the candidates endorsed by the former president suffering electoral defeats.

The Warnock win in Georgia means that U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris will not be tied up in the Senate breaking ties between an evenly split chamber, which would have likely been a common occurrence, allowing her to focus on other policy matters. This runoff was a big win for Democrats, as Georgia has traditionally been a conservative and red-leaning state. Some political experts had pointed to Warnock's initial special election victory over Kelly Loeffler as a sign that Democrats can certainly compete in Georgia.

The make-up of the incoming Senate could take a lot of bargaining power away from Democratic Senator Joe Manchin, who has broken away from the party many times on bills that they have attempted to pass – especially environmental protection bills. Raphael Warnock's win may also have an effect on the potential to pass bipartisan pieces of legislation, giving Democrats more power to negotiate compromises with the Republican-led House.